

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01

SAJ-01 DRC-01 EURE-00 (ISO) W
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O R 111400Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3650

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS

DIA FOR A2 AND D15

REF: ROME 3296

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1. ROUND TABLE CENTER-LEFT DISCUSSION SATURDAY, MARCH 9, PRODUCED

CONSENSUS FOR ADN CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS TOWARD THREE-PARTY CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT, TO WHICH REPUBLICANS DECLARED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO GIVE OUTSIDE SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT. TALKS WILL RESUME AT 5 P.M. TODAY, MARCH 11, DC SOURCES TELL US THAT TODAY'S MEETING WILL DEAL NOT ONLY WITH NEW GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM, BUT IS ALSO LIKELY TO EXTEND TO DIVISION OF MINISTRIES AMONG PARTICIPATING PARTIES.

2. MANY OBSERVERS SUGGEST THAT IF PRESENT MOMENTUM IS MAINTAINED NEW GOVERNMENT COULD BE PUT TOGETHER BY WEEK'S END. HOWEVER, DIFFICULTIES COULD STILL ARISE OVER BOTH PROGRAM AND SPOILS, PARTICULARLY AS SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SEEK ASSURANCES THAT GOVERNMENT HAVE GOOD CHANCE TO LAST BEYOND REFERENDUM, AND AT THE SAME TIME REPORTEDLY ARE DEMANDING ONE OF KEY ECONOMIC MINISTRIES, FROM WHICH THEY WERE EXCLUDED IN OUTGOING GOVERNMENT. STILL TO BE DECIDED IS ISSUE OF ACCEPTANCE OF IMF STANDBY. AUTHORITATIVE DC SOURCE TELLS US THAT LETTER OF INTENT LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED AS IS, BUT STATED THAT POSSIBLY RENEGOTIATION OF "A WORD OR TWO" MIGHT BE UNDERTAKEN AS A FACE SAVING GESTURE TO THE PSI. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WILL INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF PSI AND PSDI MINORITIES, AS WELL AS SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CARRY-OVERS FROM OUTGOING GOVERNMENT. OF POSSIBLE RELEVANCE IN NOMINATION OF MINISTERS WAS MARCH 8 DECISION OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY COMMISSION ON OIL SCANDAL TO "ARCHIVE" (SQUASH) CHARGES AGAINST ANDREOTTI, FERRARI-AGGRADI, BOSCO (ALL DEC), AND PRETI (PSDI), WHILE REFERRING TO FORMAL INVESTIGATION SIMILAR CHARGES AGAINST FERRI (PSDI) AND VALSECCHI (DC).

3. IN SPEECHES OVER WEEKEND, COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER REITERATED THREAT THAT PCI WOULD ABANDON SOFT OPPOSITION TO CENTER-LEFT IN FAVOR OF "CLEAR AND INTRANSIGENT OPPOSITION" IN THE EVENT THAT NEW GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PROPERLY ADDRESS FUNDAMENTAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING COUNTRY. BOTH DC AND LAY PARTY SOURCES TELL US THAT THEY FEAR PCI IN FACT WILL ADOPT TOUGHER LINE TOWARDS GOVERNMENT, AT LEAST FOR DURATION OF REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN. VOLPE

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